

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, AUGUST 20, 2001

CONTACT: KATHY LYDON
630-655-2052

**BIGGERT ANNOUNCES GRANT TO
ROMEOVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT**
Federal funds to finance Fitness for Firefighters

Clarendon Hills, Illinois – The Fire Department of Romeoville has won a \$34,200 federal grant to launch a proposed Wellness and Fitness program, U.S. Representative Judy Biggert (R-13th) announced today.

Awarded under the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Program, the grant provides 90 percent of the \$36,000 required for the total project cost. The Romeoville Fire Department will contribute the remaining 10 percent or \$3,600.

"Our firefighters put their lives on the line for us every day," said Biggert. "The very least we can do for them is to give them the means to stay healthy and fit."

With Biggert's support, Congress last year appropriated \$100 million in fiscal year 2001 funds to help local fire departments improve safety, prevention, efficiency, fitness, and communication. According to FEMA, more than 19,700 fire departments have applied for grants this year, submitting requests totaling almost \$2.98 billion. Romeoville was among seven Illinois communities to receive grants under this latest round of FEMA announcements, which are expected to continue periodically through the end of September. To date, FEMA has awarded \$43.4 million of the \$100 million appropriated for the program.

"This is our first-ever federal grant, and we are absolutely delighted to receive it, especially given the intense competition," said Captain Michael Flaherty of the Romeoville Fire Department. "We're very grateful to Congresswoman Biggert and her staff for showing us the ropes and backing our efforts, and now we're anxious to get the program moving."

Romeoville will use the federal grant to: conduct annual physical examinations of firefighters; provide fitness evaluations and recommendations; and purchase equipment to help address any physical deficiencies that might be discovered in the course of the physical examinations.

###